



Beyond SILPs: Housing for NMDs

Agenda

1. Overview of NMD placement rights
2. Common challenges and barriers
3. Case examples & small group discussion
4. Report back & discussion of best practices

OVERVIEW OF PLACEMENT RIGHTS

Right to Placement

- Foster youth, including NMDs, have a right to “live in a safe, healthy, and comfortable home.” WIC § 16001.9
- NMDs have the same right to placement as children in foster care. WIC § 303(e)
- State law defines the types of placement available for NMDs:
 - Placement with relatives, extended family members, and tribal members, foster family homes, treatment certified homes, THP+FC, SILP, and in certain circumstances, congregate care settings

Right to Appropriate Placement

- Choice of placement must be based upon:
 - The least restrictive family setting that promotes normal childhood experiences
 - The most appropriate setting that meets the child's individual needs and is available, in proximity to the parent's home, in proximity to the child's school
 - The environment best suited to meet the child's special needs and best interests
 - **The developmental needs of young adults**
 - **Providing opportunities to have incremental responsibilities that prepare for transition to successful adulthood**

WIC § 16501.1; ACL 11-77.

Right to Emergency Placement

- Foster youth, including NMDs, are entitled to receive emergency placements, as needed
 - Nonminor may be housed in an emergency shelter
 - Emergency shelter must be provided in a licensed or approved eligible facility

WIC 16541; ACL 11-77

- **Note:** NMDs have the same right to emergency placement that foster children do

Type of Placement	Description
Relative or Foster Family Home	<ul style="list-style-type: none">-When foster youth approaches age 18...caregiver and young adult may want to...[define] different roles as caregiver and young adult."-“Increased responsibility based on the developmental needs of the NMD”
THP+FC	<ul style="list-style-type: none">-For NMDs who are “not ready for highly independent living situation”-“More frequent and intensive services for NMDs than other placement options”
SILP	<ul style="list-style-type: none">-“Highly independent living experiences”-“No caregiver or provider to assist the NMDs”- “Assessment must take into account that youth’s level of skills and ability to manage independent living in the least restrictive environment”

COMMON CHALLENGES

Common Challenges

- While many NMDs can take advantage of existing placement options, some NMDs do not receive what they need from what is currently available
- These NMDs often face concurrent challenges which further hinder their success and self-sufficiency
- As a result, some NMDs experience homelessness while they are in foster care

Youth Voice

- What is your vision for youth-centered housing?
- What are the values that the system should embody?
- Who should be added to the conversation about housing for foster youth?

Could CA Have More Expansive Array of Housing Options to Serve NMDs?

- **YES** -- Federal guidance allows states to be innovative in development of housing to meet the needs of youth age 18 and older:
 - “A title IV-E agency has the discretion to develop a range of supervised independent living settings which can be reasonably interpreted as consistent with the law, including whether or not such settings need to be licensed and any safety protocols that may be needed.”
 - Options could include: “host homes, college dormitories, shared housing, semi-supervised apartments, supervised apartments or another housing arrangement meet the supervised setting requirement.”
 - “We encourage the title IV-E agency to be innovative in determining the best living arrangements that could meet an older child’s needs for supervision and support as he/she moves toward independence.”

CASE STUDIES

Case Study #1

- **Kevin:**
 - 19 years old
 - Has been employed for 2 months part-time at a restaurant & attends work regularly with good job performance
 - Has worked part-time for up to 6 months in the past
 - Wants to study culinary arts and become a chef
 - Was terminated from THP+FC with 7 days notice for smoking marijuana in his room
 - Was denied from second THP+FC and told to re-apply when he has been drug-free for six months
 - Says he is not ready to stop smoking marijuana because it relaxes him
 - Has no family that he can live with, but has a good relationship with his biological mother

Case Study #2

- **Amber:**

- 18 years old
- Parenting a two year old & 8 months pregnant
- Will be exited from THP+FC once second child is born because there is no available apartment for 2-child family
- History of CSEC involvement
- Has told her CSW that she will go stay with a “friend” when she leaves THP+FC and wants to know if the friend’s home can be approved as a SILP
- CSW has concerns that “friend” may be trafficker or related to the trafficker
- Amber has been exited from multiple placements in the past due to verbal conflicts with peers and staff because she believes that others are too critical of her parenting
- Amber is excited about having her second child and is committed to being a loving parent to both her children

Case Study #3

- **Dennis:**
 - 19 years old
 - Mild cognitive deficits and mental health diagnosis of bipolar disorder
 - Usually takes his medications, but needs frequent reminders
 - Regularly uses marijuana and other substances
 - Wants to complete high school, and has tried to enroll himself in school multiple times but does not always attend consistently
 - Has been in and out of adult shelters in the past year and spent multiple nights on the street
 - Due to extreme housing instability, does not have a primary care physician or consistent mental health treatment provider

Group Discussion & Brainstorm

- What are the characteristics of a placement that would best serve this youth's right to an appropriate placement?
- What steps can the child welfare professionals in this youth's life (e.g., CSW, attorney, wraparound team, CASA, etc.) take to enforce the youth's right to an appropriate placement?
- What recommendations do you have for the team working with the youth?
- What are best practices you have observed or instituted that serve the needs of youth who face similar challenges?

BEST PRACTICES & RECOMMENDATIONS

Best Practices & Recommendations: THP+FC

- Note: THP+FC is **flexible**
 - Contract with a range of providers to offer an array of THP+FC options that meet the varying needs of youth
 - “Light-touch” programs that give most of the foster care payment back to the youth
 - “Medium-touch” programs that provide robust education/employment support programs and mentorship
 - Programs that offer intensive on-site mental health, behavioral health, or substance use support
- Incorporate harm reduction principles into THP+FC programs

Best Practices & Recommendations: SILP

- Note: SILP is also **flexible**
 - Supportive SILPs: SILP with a trusted adult and wraparound services in community setting
 - SILP in adult treatment facility
 - Can use SILP funds to pay for facility
 - Note: must be voluntary placement

Best Practices & Recommendations:

Emergency Placement

- Utilize THP+FC as emergency placement for TAY for 30-60 days
 - Example: Stepping Stones in Sonoma County
- Identify a certain number of STRTP beds as emergency placements
 - County may need to supplement rate to ensure that beds remain open for emergency placements
- Partner with homeless youth service providers to license emergency placements for TAY

Questions?

Thank you!

Alexandria Maldonado

Young Leader
Opportunity Youth Collaborative

Doniesha Thomas

Young Leader
Opportunity Youth Collaborative

Brian Blalock

Director of Law & Policy
Tipping Point Community
bblalock@tippingpoint.org

Angie Schwartz

Director, Policy Program
Alliance for Children's Rights
a.schwartz@kids-alliance.org

Nisha Kashyap

Staff Attorney, Transition Age Youth
Services
Alliance for Children's Rights
n.kashyap@kids-alliance.org